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Attorneys for Plaintiffs

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

LOS ANGELES PRESS CLUB,
STATUS COUP,

PLAINTIFFS,

v.

CITY OF LOS ANGELES, a
municipal entity, JIM McDONNELL,
LAPD CHIEF, sued in his official
capacity;

DEFENDANTS.

Case No. 25-cv-05423 HDV-E

**DECLARATION OF SEAN
BECKNER-CARMITCHEL IN
SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS'
MOTION FOR CONTEMPT**

Hon. Hernán D. Vera

Date: TBD

Time: TBD

Ctrm: 5B

Declaration of Sean Beckner-Carmitchel

I, Sean Beckner-Carmitchel, hereby declare:

1. I am a freelance multi-media journalist in the Southern California area and member of the Los Angeles Press Club. I submit this declaration in support of the PLAINTIFFS' EX PARTE APPLICATION FOR CONTEMPT. I make this declaration based on my own personal knowledge and if called to testify I could and would do so competently as follows:

2. I have been working as a freelance journalist in the Southern California area for the past six years. I produce video, audio, photos and articles about a range of events and topics, with a focus on law enforcement agencies and public protests. My work has been published by various news organizations, including CNN, ABC's Good Morning America, BBC, The New York Times, CalMatters, the Beverly Hills Courier, Los Angeles Public Press, and Knock LA. I have posted my videos and reporting on my account on the online social media platform BlueSky and on YouTube.

3. Based on my six years of reporting about law enforcement in the Los Angeles area, I am able to recognize LAPD officers by their cars that are marked "Los Angeles Police Department," and their dark blue uniforms, and arm patches.

4. On August 8, 2025, I was working as a freelance photojournalist covering a protest and march against federal immigration raids in Los Angeles that began at a Home Depot in the Westlake neighborhood in the City of Los Angeles. I was wearing my press identification card created by the Los Angeles Press Club, which is a laminated photograph of me and the words "press" in a lanyard attached to my pants. I carried one Sony A7 camera, which is commonly used for professional news gathering. A true and correct copy of my Los Angeles Press Club press identification card is attached hereto as Exhibit 85.

5. I filmed protesters as they marched on public streets and sidewalks from the Home Depot to the federal Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) where immigrants are being held. The march lasted over two hours.

1 6. When I arrived at the MDC, I saw that about 100 protesters had stopped in
2 front of that building and were protesting in a spirited, non-violent way. A group of
3 LAPD officers drove up to the area, got out of their vehicles, and eventually formed a
4 line in the street in front of the MDC. I saw police conversing with protesters. The
5 officers were wearing riot gear. Some protesters were standing in the street shouting at
6 police officers. From my vantage point, I did not see the protesters act violently or throw
7 anything at officers when the officers arrived. I saw several other journalists who were
8 peacefully filming and reporting about the protest and LAPD actions outside the MDC,
9 including Nick Stern, a British photojournalist.

10 7. At some point, I saw the LAPD officers form a line in the street in front of
11 the MDC and start screaming at the protesters to “Move back” as officers marched with
12 their batons drawn. I did not hear any declaration of an unlawful assembly or dispersal
13 order at this point. As the LAPD line moved toward the protesters, I saw officers shove
14 quite a few people to the ground. I did not hear any instructions for media. I saw LAPD
15 officers strike multiple journalists with batons, and shove and push journalists in the
16 street in a span of a few minutes.

17 8. As things calmed down, I checked on British photojournalist Nick Stern,
18 who had visible blood on his face, press identification card, and shirt. I took photographs
19 and video of him displaying a press identification card to the LAPD officer, but the
20 officer hit him with a baton anyway. It is difficult for me to believe that the LAPD
21 officer did not see his press pass. Nick Stern was wearing a dark shirt, pants, and a
22 camera with a microphone attached. True and correct copies of my photographs of Nick
23 Stern are attached hereto as Exhibit 104 available at

24 [https://drive.google.com/file/d/15uOfnxSVW2csaYmYnmIbC4FFPYtdRpyv/view?usp=](https://drive.google.com/file/d/15uOfnxSVW2csaYmYnmIbC4FFPYtdRpyv/view?usp=share_link)
25 [share_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/15uOfnxSVW2csaYmYnmIbC4FFPYtdRpyv/view?usp=share_link) and Exhibit 108 available at
26 [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FemMc5JeiiSuPhzIH6Gy-](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FemMc5JeiiSuPhzIH6Gy-E6xuxmOE8Xf/view?usp=drive_link)
27 [E6xuxmOE8Xf/view?usp=drive_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FemMc5JeiiSuPhzIH6Gy-E6xuxmOE8Xf/view?usp=drive_link)
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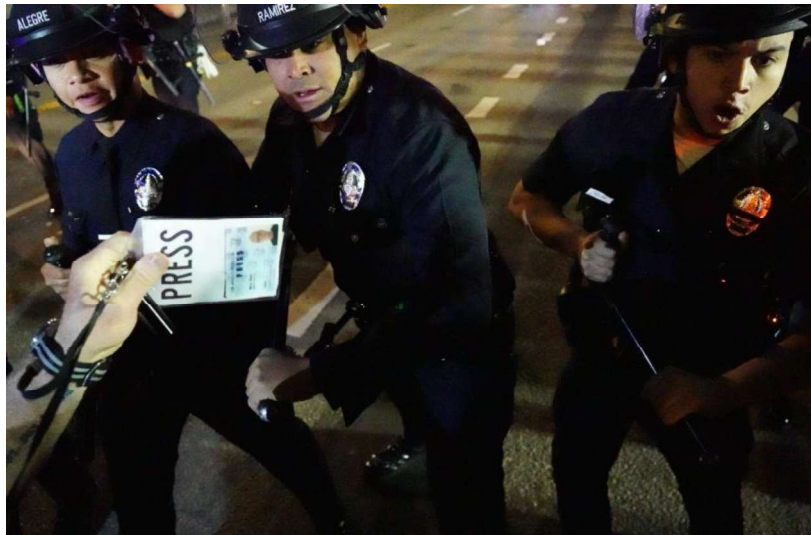


Exhibit 104

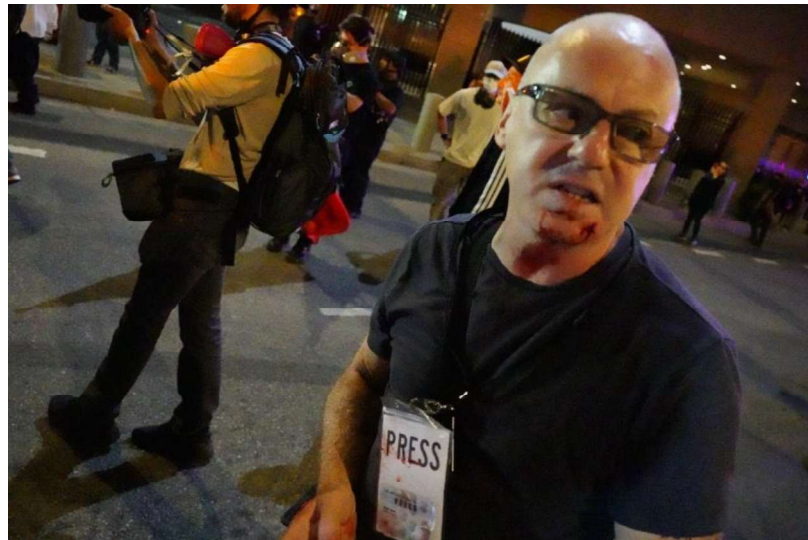


Exhibit 108

9. At some point when the LAPD officers were not marching toward the protesters, I approached the police line and said, "I'd like to see a supervisor or public affairs officer," known as a PIO. But I was told move back. I told the officers something to the effect of, "I want to remind of you of [Penal Code section] 409.7. There's a lot of media that's gotten hurt." An LAPD officer responded by shoving me and hitting me in my ribs on my left side with his baton. I still have sore ribs a day later and a small bruise. In that moment, the police were not marching their line towards protesters. Everyone was standing in place.

10. During other calm moments, I asked LAPD Officers standing in line for a

1 supervisor or public information officer multiple times, but I either received blank stares
2 from LAPD officers, or I was told to move. See e.g. Exhibit 090 at 3:02 available at
3 [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1is3kdg6eLDSp0-GWzw-](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1is3kdg6eLDSp0-GWzw-aooLxEP531_SZ/view?usp=drive_link)
4 [aooLxEP531_SZ/view?usp=drive_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1is3kdg6eLDSp0-GWzw-aooLxEP531_SZ/view?usp=drive_link) ; Exhibit 106 at 0:29-0:44 & 1:10-2:14 available
5 at [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VC_YjLaSWjnh6c0gnuWs-](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VC_YjLaSWjnh6c0gnuWs-kFpGPO570yc/view?usp=sharing)
6 [kFpGPO570yc/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VC_YjLaSWjnh6c0gnuWs-kFpGPO570yc/view?usp=sharing)

7 11. At some point, I heard the LAPD make a dispersal order. I did not leave my
8 position covering the protest and police because I thought I had the right to stay behind
9 police lines and report about the protesters and police because of Penal Code section
10 409.7 and the temporary restraining order in this case.

11 12. Many of the protestors left at that point, but about 20 protestors remained. I
12 stayed with them, as did several other journalists, as LAPD pushed them down a side
13 street east of Alameda Street.

14 13. Once again I approached the police line and I said something to the effect
15 of, "I'd like to speak to a supervisor or PIO, and I want to gently remind you all of
16 409.7 and the TRO." An LAPD officer told me to wait and they would talk to a
17 supervisor. An LAPD officer came up to me and asked me, "Do you need to leave?" I
18 said, "No, I want to remind you of 409.7 and the TRO." No supervisor was made
19 available to me. So eventually I moved away from the police line, being concerned for
20 my safety waiting in front of those officers.

21 14. The police line began moving again, pushing the protesters to North Garey
22 Street near Ducommun Street. Eventually an officer yelled out, "Everyone get against
23 the wall." The officers effectively kettled the protesters and several members of the
24 media, including me. I calmly walked up to an LAPD officer, "Do you mean media as
25 well?" The officer signaled that I had to join the others at the wall. A true and correct
26 copy of my video of this interaction with LAPD officer is attached hereto as Exhibit 105,
27 available at [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TOgtHDrb8F_0fmfS5ddlNA9Z9Ib3Z-](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TOgtHDrb8F_0fmfS5ddlNA9Z9Ib3Z-Ip/view?usp=share_link)
28 [Ip/view?usp=share_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TOgtHDrb8F_0fmfS5ddlNA9Z9Ib3Z-Ip/view?usp=share_link).

1 15. The LAPD then made about 20 protesters and several members of the
2 media, including me, stand against the wall and told everyone to face the wall. I said,
3 “Hey, there is 409.7 and TRO,” but the officers said that doesn’t matter right now. I said,
4 “It does matter, though, because the statute pretty much dictates that media is exempt
5 from dispersal orders.” I asked for a supervisor or PIO about 10 more times. During my
6 detainment, I went live on YouTube and was actually cuffed while live on YouTube
7 multiple times asking for supervisor, told it wasn’t important right now, it doesn’t matter
8 right now.

9 16. The other journalists I saw detained with me included photojournalist Carrie
10 Shreck, photojournalist Nate Gowdy, and independent journalist Mel Buer. Mel Buer
11 was wearing a white press pass throughout the detainment. A true and correct copy of a
12 photograph showing me and journalists Mel Buer and Nate Gowdy standing against the
13 wall as we were detained, showing that I and Buer had our white press identification
14 cards attached to the outside of our clothing as we were detained by the LAPD is
15 attached as Exhibit 107, available at



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23 [https://drive.google.com/file/d/10EfqRsg54XOIehud57w4dUhvX5fGjO0P/view?usp=dr](https://drive.google.com/file/d/10EfqRsg54XOIehud57w4dUhvX5fGjO0P/view?usp=drive_link)
24 [ive_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/10EfqRsg54XOIehud57w4dUhvX5fGjO0P/view?usp=drive_link)


25 17. One LAPD officer, whose name I believe is Gallegos, was putting flex cuffs
26 on me when I asked for supervisor or PIO, and he told me, I can “bitch” however I want.
27 I was cuffed with plastic flex cuffs and ordered to stand next to the wall for 1-2 hours. I
28 could hear some protesters shouting to the police that some members of the media were

1 being detained.

2 18. Eventually an LAPD officer asked for my name and my identifying
3 information. I pointedly told the officer that my ID was in my wallet in my right pocket,
4 beneath my press pass. An officer gave me a handwritten card dated 8-8-25 that said,
5 "Detained during an illegal assembly. Failed to disperse after multiple dispersal orders."
6 A true and correct copy of the card is attached hereto as Exhibit 86, available at
7 [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WROTVaOSI-](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WROTVaOSI-hx1bpT6ijLqirLpOgCdoeO/view?usp=share_link)
8 [hx1bpT6ijLqirLpOgCdoeO/view?usp=share_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WROTVaOSI-hx1bpT6ijLqirLpOgCdoeO/view?usp=share_link).

9 19. I repeatedly asked for PIO or supervisor when I was being detained. Finally,
10 after I had been detained for about 1-2 hours, LAPD Lieutenant Cherie L. Stelter
11 approached the group who had been cuffed and asked if we were media. I said I was
12 media, and said several others said they were media. Lt. Stelter asked where my
13 credential were. I showed her my Los Angeles Press Club press identification card. Lt.
14 Stelter lectured me and the other journalists who had been detained that we were at fault
15 because we stayed in the crowd of protesters, but Lt. Stelter did not acknowledge that
16 LAPD officers failed to give any instructions to the media. I asked for Lt. Stelter's card,
17 which she did not give to me immediately. I then asked another lieutenant, who provided
18 the card for the two lieutenants. Despite me requesting Gallegos' card, I never received
19 it. When I was in the process of being uncuffed and allowed to leave, I began filming
20 again, and an officer told me I was still under detainment and was not permitted to film.
21 One officer made fun of me, saying, something to the effect of, "You are expert on the
22 law now?" I asked the officer if they had been trained on 409.7, and he said yes.

23 I declare under penalty of perjury of the laws of the State of California and the
24 United States that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed this 11th day of August,
25 2025, in Los Angeles, California.

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Sean Beckner-Carmitchel